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EPISTLE

FROM

THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE,

TO

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Non divitiis cum divite, neque factione cum factioso; sed cum strenuo virtute, cum modesto pudore, cum innocente abstinentia certabat; esse quam videri bonus malebat.

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1800.

EPISTLE

FROM

THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE,

TO

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

LONG doomed to all the wretchedneſs of woe,
In Olmutz' dungeon deſolate and low;
Where, fixt by fetters to my clay-cold bed,
Full ſixty moons have circled o'er my head;
Whilſt weeping angels fondly ſtrove, in vain,
With lenient care to mitigate my pain;
And hope, which long preferr'd the pious prayer,
Sunk in the ſullen gulf of dark deſpair.
At length the hand of Providence divine
Unlocks my chains, and liberty is mine.

Imperial juſtice, bluſhing at my wrongs,
Blazoned abroad by Fame's ten thouſand tongues,
Relents at laſt. I breathe celeſtial air,
And view the face of heaven divinely fair.
Woods, hills and dales, delight my raviſh'd eye;
I taſte each gale that breathes along the ſky;
Whilſt anxious friends each tender care beſtow,
To ſoothe the ſad remembrance of my woe.
Alas! too late: For deep within my heart
Is fix'd death's irremediable dart;
His fatal poiſon glows in every vein;
His tortures rack with never-ceaſing pain;
And youth, and health, and joys untimely flown,
Point my ſad paſſage to the world unknown.
Yet, ere I viſit that ſequeſtered bourne,
From whoſe dark paths no travellers return;
Ere yet this ſad, this perſecuted head,
In the cold earth ſhall find a peaceful bed;
To thee, O! Waſhington, I'll pour my grief,
In thy kind boſom ſeek my laſt relief;

'Fore heav'n and thee my inmoſt ſoul diſplay,
And ſtate my conduct in the face of day;
From ſland'rous wrongs to vindicate my name,
And ſave, 'tis all I can, a mangled fame.
To you theſe laſt, theſe mournful lines I ſend,
My youth's protector, and my honoured friend.
In life's gay morning, ere deluſive art
Suppreſt the genuine impulſe of the heart,
You ſaw my nature act without controul,
You knew the inmoſt ſecrets of my ſoul;
Above the world's, your approbation's dear,
And next to heaven's, your friendſhip I revere.
O! that high heaven, which fir'd my throbbing heart,
With eager zeal to act a patriot's part;
To quell the proud, to animate the brave,
And from oppreſſion's yoke redeem the ſlave:
O! had it proſper'd what my genius plann'd,
Led me like thee to ſave my native land;
To heal its wrongs, to ſooth each patriot groan,
Repreſs ſedition, and ſupport the throne;

With what delight would I reſume my chain,
And hail my dungeon, and its damps again;
On the cold earth repoſe my peaceful head,
And placid ſink among the ſilent dead.
But ah! what horrid ſights around me riſe?
What ſcenes diſcordant meet my mournful eyes?
What hideous paſſions fill this gloomy ſtage?
The monkey's frolic with the tiger's rage;
Wild ſhrieks are blended with ſoft muſic's tones,
And laughter mixt with agonizing groans;
O'er ſtreams of blood we ſee the banquet ſpread,
And frenzy dancing midſt the mangled dead.
All-gracious heaven! for thy ſupreme decree
Ordains thoſe pains we feel, thoſe ills we ſee;
Thy ſov'reign arm with awful vengeance red,
Inflicts thoſe judgments on our guilty head.
Say, for what cauſe, unknown in former times,
Does earth now teem with aggravated crimes?
Does ſavage licence fire the human ſoul,
And ſhake the globe from Atlas to the Pole?

Even nature changes; ſhe whoſe high beheſt,
Planted ſoft pity in the female breaſt,
Now fires with rage; the virgin's tender heart,
Midſt blood and carnage, tops the maniac's part.
The wife *illumined*, flies the bridal bed,
To call for vengeance on a huſband's head;
And the fond mother, now a patriot grown,
Joys in the murder of her once lov'd ſon;
Whilſt kindred furies, what can hell do more?
Gnaw the ſtill quivering limbs, and ſuck the ſtreaming gore.
Firſt let me own, and with a bleeding heart,
In all theſe ills, I bore too large a part;
By pride enflam'd, by raſh preſumption driven,
Bereft, abandoned by the light of heaven,
I madly fought, on this devoted ground,
By vice polluted, in corruption drown'd,
To raiſe that flame, which liberty imparts
To none but brave, to none but virtuous hearts.
The mind that ſtoops, to ſordid vice a ſlave,
Is neither truly free, nor truly brave.

Freedom, like happineſs, diſdains to reſt
In the dark precincts of the guilty breaſt;
From ſcenes of vice, luxurious vice, ſhe flies
To heath-clad mountains, and tempeſtuous ſkies;
Where, nurs'd by poverty, at virtue's ſhrine,
She lifts the ſoul from earthly to divine.

But where ambition toils with ceaſeleſs art,
Or rank corruption blackens all the heart;
Where paſſions rage, and ſelfiſh vices reign,
There let oppreſſion ſtretch her iron chain;
For ſouls like theſe, unworthy to be free,
Are doom'd to chains, by heaven's ſupreme decree;
Which fix'd this ſentence for the human breaſt,
That virtue only can be truly bleſt.

No golden mean theſe abject ſpirits know,
In wild diſcordance all their actions flow;
A deſpot's rod muſt rule the ſervile ſoul,
Or ſavage licence reigns without controul;
Whilſt, like a tempeſt o'er the affrighted land,
Fell horror flies, and from her blood-ſtained hand,

Diſpenſes fearful thro' the troubled air,
Guilt, and remorſe, and ſhame, and dark deſpair,
And ſavage fury, ſuch as late we ſaw
O'erwhelm religion, liberty and law;
And crimes, whoſe recompence ſhall never ceaſe,
Blaſt the ſoft ſcenes of harmony and peace.

From deeds like theſe, my wounded ſpirit flies,
For peace and comfort, to your weſtern ſkies;
Where ſimple nature, unſeduced by art,
To pureſt pleaſures, leads the untainted heart;
Where laws and manners bear imperial ſway,
And men, tho' born to rule, with pride obey;
Where honeſt labour earns her daily bread,
And ſmiling plenty all around is ſpread;
Whilſt ſweet contentment cheers the ſturdy ſwain,
And freedom wantons in her lov'd domain.

Theſe were the ſcenes which once ſo well I knew,
And ſcenes like theſe, imagination drew,
With magic colours, and deluſive art,
To lure from wiſdom's ways my witleſs heart;

With raſh preſumption, lead me to deſpiſe
Thoſe awful forms our ſires had found ſo wiſe;
Launch my frail bark on innovation's tide,
And riſk a ſtate in philoſophic pride.
Yet not to me alone belongs the blame
Of raſh preſumption; let me boldly name,
With reverence due, the miniſter of fate,
The Palinurus [1] of the ſinking ſtate.

Tho' heaven-born genius fir'd his glowing mind,
By ſcience nurtured [2], and by taſte refined;
Tho' ſteady honour, loyalty ſincere,
And every patriot virtue flouriſhed there;
And meek-eyed piety, celeſtial maid,
Her brighteſt proſpects to his ſoul pourtray'd:
Yet raſh preſumption blaſted all the ſcene;
His ſplendid talents were beſtowed in vain;
And even his virtues prov'd a nation's bane.

True virtue from within her ſanction draws,
And ſcorns the luſt of popular applauſe.

But idly vain, and impotently proud,
To ſtand the idol of the gaping crowd;
With trembling hand to ſway the mighty ſcene,
And curb opinion's fluctuating rein;
With reaſon's voice to guide the ſenſeleſs throng,
And hear his praiſe reſound from every tongue:
For this he dared, with ſacrilegious hand,
To break the ſceptre of ſupreme command;
To blaſt its honours, and, in luckleſs hour,
Above the throne [3] exalt the people's power.

Hence ſprung the ills which France muſt long deplore,
And hence the crimes which deſolate her ſhore;
By him unchain'd, fell anarchy ruſh'd forth,
Fierce as the whirlwinds of the ſtormy north;
And innovation [4], at his call, aroſe,
The fruitful parent of a nation's woes.

His was the fate (ye virtuous patriots hear,
Nor ſcorn the warning which the good revere);
His was the fate to break each ſacred law,
Which his heart own'd with reverential awe.

With patriot paſſions warm, he curs'd the land,
And ſpread ſedition with a liberal hand;
With ſoft compaſſion glowing in his heart,
He taught to point the Furies venom'd dart;
And whilſt each virtūe in his conduct ſhone,
He ſhook the altar, and o'erturn'd the throne.

Ne'er, ſince the tide of time began to flow,
Did ſpecious virtue work ſuch ſcenes of woe;
Nor e'er did vice, beneath a tyrant's hand,
Diffuſe ſuch judgments o'er a guilty land.
An awful inſtance, that the nobleſt parts
Without diſcretion prove but baneful arts;
A ſtriking leſſon ſent to teach mankind,
True wiſdom is humility of mind[5].

Now pierc'd with grief, he ſeeks his native ſhade,
And in Helvetia's foreſts hides his head.
Tho' conſcious virtue own his high deſert,
And ſmile approving round his upright heart;
Yet ſhame, and grief, and life-corroding care,
And ſecret anguiſh, alſo harbour there,

And wan deſpair, a dark unbidden gueſt,
Points to the place where all the wretched reſt.
So in your wilds, when oft the peaſant's care,
By fire hath laid the tangled foreſt bare;
Where Suſquehannah rolls his rapid flood,
With lonely murmurs thro' a waſte of wood;
Or where Kentucky's ſmiling vallies lie,
And ſpread their boſoms to a warmer ſky;
Some giant oak, which hath for ages ſtood,
And joy'd to ſtand, the monarch of the wood;
Whilſt Sylvan honours deck his verdant head,
And thick around his moſſy branches ſpread;
Whilſt ſimple ſwains his wondrous growth admire,
Deep in his heart he feels devouring fire,
Sinks to the earth with unperceiv'd decay,
And, inly pining [6], waſtes, and dies away.
But ah! what torments can the fiends deviſe?
What darker regions ſhall in hell ariſe,
To welcome thoſe, who, feigning love and truth,
Pour their hot poiſon on the minds of youth;

Corrupt their morals, taint each vital part,
And root fair virtue from the opening heart,
Prove all its hopes to be but idle dreams,
And quench religion's ſalutary beams;
Deprive weak mortals of her genial light,
And plunge their proſpects in eternal night?

Dark was the ſcene, when ſuperſtition trod,
In terrors clad, the pageant of a God,
When, high exalted, from his throne he hurl'd
Diſmay and darkneſs o'er a proſtrate world;
When wretched mortals, kneeling at his ſhrine,
Miſtook his mandates for a voice divine,
And, wildly ſtriving to appeaſe his ire,
Conſign'd their offspring to devouring fire.

But darker horrors gloom'd, that fatal day
When hell-born atheiſts held imperial ſway,
When heaven, in vengeance for a nation's crimes,
In ſad memorial to remoteſt times,
Gave a whole people to th' enſanguin'd rod
Of perjured traitors, reckleſs of a God;

Of dire fanatics, whoſe relentleſs zeal,
Fiercer than Prieſts or bigot Pontiffs feel,
To bleſs mankind, burns with infuriate joy,
To blaſt their hopes, to murder and deſtroy.
Their blood-ſtain'd daggers ſtruck at all mankind,
And, worſt of murders, they have murder'd mind;
Their impious doctrines poiſon'd all the ſoul,
Taught every vice to rage without controul,
And ſhowed that man, by God and nature curſt,
Of hell-born monſters is by far the worſt.
Their impious madneſs ſought to ſcale the ſky,
And drive the Eternal from his throne on high;
But as their fire, the great archangel fell,
And waked confounded in the gulf of hell,
The pangs of rage, ambition's venom'd dart,
And baffled malice rankling in his heart;
So they, from peace, from hope, and freedom driven,
For ever exiled from the gates of heaven,
Their ſhort lived dream of power and pleaſure paſt,
Awake to ſhame and miſery at laſt,

And vent the ravings of their dark deſpair,
By blaſting all that's good, and all that's fair.
What bitter ſtreams hath this nefarious band
Pour'd forth, relentleſs, o'er a guilty land!
What ſcenes of vice! what prodigies of crimes!
Shall wake heav'ns vengeance on remoteſt times.
Sad recompence of guilt! revolving years
Tho' ſpent in ſorrow, penitence, and tears,
Ages of virtue never can repair
Their maniac deeds of darkneſs and deſpair.
Unhappy country! with a bleeding heart,
I mourn thoſe ills, of which the heavieſt part
As yet abides thee. Whither muſt thou go?
Through what new ſcenes of wretchedneſs and woe?
What untried torments muſt thou yet endure?
What racking pangs that never hope a cure?
What weight of woe can expiate thy guilt;
Thy broken vows, the blood profuſely ſpilt;
Thy temples plundered, and thy king dethron'd;
Thy monarch murdered, and thy God diſown'd?

What tho' no ſigns athwart the troubled ſky,
Speak the dread hour of retribution nigh;
No dire portents preſage approaching fate;
No earthquakes heave, to warn a tott'ring ſtate;
Nor lawleſs comets, thro' the murky air,
Portending change, with lurid aſpect glare:
Yet Reaſon's voice, ſuperior to the power
Of nature's baubles [7], hails th' approaching hour,
When heaven's dread thunder flaming in his hand,
The avenging angel, o'er the guilty land
Shall ride, in terrors clad, and on thee pour
The ills thy fury ſpread o'er many a circling ſhore.
Whether long years of anarchy and blood
Shall lave the nation in a crimſon flood,
Or ſtern oppreſſion bend with iron rod
Thoſe recreant necks which ſcorn'd to bow to God;
Let this conſole thee, midſt diſgrace and pain,
Thou haſt not ſinn'd, thou haſt not bled in vain;
Whate'er thy fate, pre-eminent in crimes,
Thou ſpeak'ſt heaven's juſtice to remoteſt times.

And diſtant tribes, in ages yet to come,
Shall ſhun thy guilt, and tremble at thy doom:
A mighty nation to deſtruction hurl'd,
The ſcourge, the ſcorn, the warning of a world.
Sick unto death, I quit this dreary ſcene,
By crimes diſgrac'd, by follies rendered vain;
And half rejoicing, caſt a languid eye,
Where Britain's glory blazes to the ſky.
Hail ſacred ſource of energy divine!
Around whoſe ſtandard gath'ring ſtates combine.
Hail ſacred ſource, whence willing nations draw
Religion, order, liberty, and law,
With all thoſe virtues, friendly to mankind,
Which grace, adorn, and elevate the mind.
Firm on her rock, ſee Britain's genius ſtand,
And ſpread her guardian arms o'er many a land!
Whilſt conquering navies, every ſail unfurl'd,
Spread freedom's banners o'er a grateful world.
See, ſafe encircled by her guardian tide!
She ſcorns the rage of innovating pride;

And, true to nature's great primæval plan,
Maintains the duties, not the rights of man,
Duties which bound us [8], ere thoſe rights began;
Fantaſtic rights, which lure the giddy throng,
And, frantic, keep them ever in the wrong.

From Britain ſprung, from her you caught the flame,
O CHIEF! of freedom's all inſpiring name;
That ſacred flame, whoſe genial influence warms
The ſtormy north, and all its rage diſarms;
With whoſe bleſt beams each fervid boſom glows
Midſt Georgia's tepid ſwamps, and Apalachian ſnows.

'Twas freedom led your ſires in days of yore,
To dare the dangers of a ſavage ſhore;
'Twas freedom lately called you to combine
Around her ſacred violated ſhrine.
And, glorious guilt! a parent's rage withſtood,
His lifted hand withheld from infant blood,
Taught you in peace, a ſacred frame to rear,
Which Greece might envy, and old Rome revere.

Then injured virtue, in that fatal hour,
O'er ſhameleſs vice, diſplayed her heavenly power;
When veteran bands, in many a bloody fray
Saw half-armed peaſants bear the prize away;
On ſportive tournaments [9], whilſt warriors wait,
And gambling chieftains ſtake a nation's fate.
Then heaven propitious led me from afar,
To ſhare your glory in the fields of war;
Led me with heart elate in youthful pride,
To tread your ſteps, and combat by your ſide.
I ſhared your councils in the grave debate;
I ſhared your danger in the hour of fate;
I ſhared your glory, that auſpicious day,
When at your feet Britannia's enſigns lay;
And wondering nations ſaw the Ocean's lord,
Submiſſive bend beneath your conquering ſword.
I ſaw you rear, with fond paternal hand,
Fair freedom's ſhoots, which now adorn the land,
And promiſe, waving o'er a fertile ſoil,
A glorious harveſt to the planter's toil.

O may no tyrant's ruthleſs hand preſume
To blaſt her bloſſoms opening into bloom;
May foreign foes, and homebred factions ceaſe
Their vain endeavours to diſturb her peace;
And, heaven-protected, may ſhe long beſtow
The pureſt bliſs which mortals taſte below.

But thus, whilſt freedom's various charms combine
To bleſs the people, what reward is thine?
Thou, who thro' life's revolving ſcenes haſt ſtood,
Firſt with the great, and nobleſt with the good;
What glorious meed ſhall grateful ſtates beſtow?
What laurels worthy to adorn thy brow?

The pomp of power, the pageantry of ſtate,
And all the baubles of the vulgar great,
Thy ſoul diſdains: More precious to thy ear,
Than ſounding titles, is the voice ſincere
Of hallow'd friendſhip; dearer to thy heart,
Affection's notes, than all the pride of art.

Ne'er, whilſt remembrance ſooths with genial ray
My languid heart, will I forget that day,

When, peace reſtor'd, and all the tumults quell'd
Of war's array, you left the tented field,
And bade your veteran bands, a faithful crew,
Their country's pride, a long, a laſt adieu!
In ſimple guiſe you ſought the Hudſon's ſhore,
A ſlender bark awaits to waft you o'er,
Around your ſteps the gathering country meets,
New-York beholds her deſolated ſtreets,
All ranks, all ages, ruſh upon the ſtrand,
Eager to bleſs you ere you leave the land.
You ſtrove to ſpeak [10]; but words their uſe deny,
And thrilling anguiſh trembled in your eye;
You wav'd your hand, the people ſilent bow'd,
And not a voice was heard thro' all the crowd.
You ſtept aboard—The wherry wafts you o'er,
The croud, ſtill ſilent, wait upon the ſhore;
No ſhout was rais'd, no joyful ſound was there,
But many a heart preferr'd the fervent prayer,
And many a tear was ſhed, and ſigh was given,
As when a father wings his flight to Heaven.

Illuſtrious chief! 'Tis thine alone to prove
The charms of glory with a nation's love.
Many, ere now, have urg'd Bellona's car,
And ſtunn'd the nations with the din of war.
Heroes before, to ſave a ſinking ſtate,
Have bar'd their boſoms to the ſtorms of fate:
In virtue's paths they onward ſeem'd to go,
And towering left a gazing world below.
But few, how few! who climb'd the ſteeps to power,
Have ſtood unſhaken in that fatal hour?
How oft did Greece from factious patriots feel,
Deep in her heart the agonizing ſteel?
His country's Genius ſinking, curs'd his name,
And murder'd freedom blaſted Cæſar's fame.
How few, like thee, have felt ambition's charms,
The pride of empire, and the pomp of arms!
Then calm reſign'd the ſceptre they poſſeſs'd,
Their country bleſſing—by their country bleſs'd?
For this ſhall fame her nobleſt trophy raiſe,
Dear to thy ſoul, a grateful nation's praiſe;

A people's love ſhall all thy ſteps attend,
A people's bleſſing on thy head deſcend;
And when at laſt thy fainted ſpirit flies,
To mix with angels in its native ſkies;
When weeping Senates hear thy final doom,
A people's grief ſhall conſecrate thy tomb;
The awe-ſtruck ſtranger oft ſhall ſeek the ſhade,
Where wrapt in earth, thy hallowed form is laid;
The youthful hero from thy ſculptured buſt,
Shall learn the glories of the good and juſt;
And whilſt he bends with rapture at thy ſhrine,
His heart ſhall catch the flame which once was thine,
And glow with patriot energy divine.
The world conſenting, ſhall thy fate deplore,
And bleſs thy name, till time ſhall be no more.
On me, alas! what different fates attend,
Tho' cruſh'd unpitied, poor without a friend;
Thro' life's lone vale with trembling ſteps I ſtray,
No hope to cheer my ſolitary way;

No bleſſing left of all that nature gave,
No place to reſt in but the ſilent grave.
In that bleſt ſpot, life's idle tumults paſt,
The wretched mourner finds repoſe at laſt.
And there (my errors graciouſly forgiven),
My weary ſoul, o'er life's rough ocean driven,
Hopes, humbly hopes to gain that peaceful ſhore,
Where guilt ſhall ſtain, and paſſions rage no more.
Yet when from life's deluſive ſcenes I part,
My country's love ſhall animate my heart;
My country's peace ſhall claim my lateſt care,
My country's welfare prompt my lateſt prayer.
Perhaps that God whom winds and ſeas obey,
Who wings the lightening, points the thunder's way;
Whoſe potent voice reſtrains the rolling flood,
And out of evil knows to call forth good;
Perhaps relenting, to the fervent prayer
Of true repentance, he may bend his ear;
His mercy may our ancient ſtate reſtore,
And bleſs the people with a father's power;

His ſovereign voice may bid contention ceaſe,
And glad the nations with returning peace.
So when old chaos in confuſion hurl'd
The latent ſeeds, the embryo of a world;
When jarring diſcord ſpread the hubbub [11] far,
And nature ſhook with elemental war;
High from his throne the Almighty viewed the ſcene,
The tumult ceaſed, and nature ſhone ſerene;
Diſcordant atoms ſunk in ſoft repoſe,
And from the deep a ſmiling world aroſe.

NOTES BY THE EDITOR.

Line 138. The Palinurus, &c.

M. Necker's character has been drawn in very different colours by the ſupporters and the oppoſers of the French revolution. But widely different as their deſcriptions are, in ſome points they all agree. Whilſt his enemies cannot withhold the praiſe of probity, of piety, of genius, and abilities; even his warmeſt admirers are forced to acknowledge, that the luſtre of theſe virtues was much tarniſhed, if not altogether effaced, by preſumption, by vanity, and the love of popular applauſe.

Line 140. By ſcience nurtured, &c.

"M. Necker (ſays Dr. Moore) was a citizen of Geneva. His education, according to the cuſtom of his country, had been more of a literary nature, than it is uſual in other countries to give to thoſe who are bred to what is called buſineſs; he cultivated his taſte for letters in the intervals of buſineſs ever after; he was thought to have juſt, extenſive, and philoſophical ideas on the ſubjects of commerce and finance; to be an able

calculator, and indefatigable in buſineſs; his greateſt enemies have not been able to injure his reputation for probity." His writings on politics, on finance, on morals, and religion, are ſufficient to eſtabliſh his reputation as a man of letters. The tempeſt of the French revolution might have raged with all its fury though Necker had never been born; but happy had it been for the peace of his own mind, if he had taken no part in its progreſs, but confined himſelf to thoſe lines of buſineſs and literature in which he was ſo eminently calculated to excel.

Line 159. Above the throne, &c.

The granting a double repreſentation to the Tiers Etat was the fatal meaſure which produced all the miſery of France; and in nothing was M. Necker's preſumption and vain love of popularity more conſpicuouſly diſplayed. He firſt appointed certain perſons to ſearch hiſtorical regiſters, and make a report concerning the plans and forms which had been obſerved in conſtituting the aſſemblies of the States on former occaſions. A report was made; but as it contained no inſtance of a double repreſentation having been granted to the Tiers Etat, for no ſuch inſtance could be found in the annals of their hiſtory, the report, as unfavourable to the democratic views of the miniſter, was ſuppreſſed. By M. Necker's advice, an aſſembly of Notables was called to decide on this important ſubject. Whilſt they were deliberating, the parliament of Paris, officiouſly perhaps, but certain

ly with that regard to authority, which is ever found in enlightened, prudent minds, gave it as their opinion, that the States ſhould be conſtituted in the ſame manner they had been in 1614, when the Tiers Etat had about the ſame number of repreſentatives with each of the other two orders.

The Notables, in their different committees, by a majority of about ten to one, decided in the ſame manner; but M. Necker, in contempt of authority, and in defiance of that reſpectable opinion which he ſeems to have ſought only to inſult, gave in his famous report to the Privy Council, on which a double repreſentation was granted to the Tiers Etat.

Hoc fonte derivata clades,
In patriam populumque fluxit.

Necker, on this occaſion, was at great pains to procure addreſſes from the provinces, in favour of his own plan. Theſe addreſſes he encouraged by pamphlets in Paris, and by letters which he himſelf wrote to the provinces; and then ſtyled the ſentiments which were returned as echoes to thoſe letters, *le bruit ſourd de l' Europe*.

Line 164. And innovation, &c.

M. Necker is here charged with the baneful effects of miſconduct, the blame of which ought, in part at leaſt, to be ſhared with others. Never did ſo abſurd an edict iſſue from any Eaſt-

ern Divan, as that publiſhed by the Archbiſhop of Thouloufe, when Miniſter of France, inviting all men, however qualified, to ſuggeſt their wild theories and viſionary ſchemes for reforming the Government of the Country. By this, the fountains of the mighty deep were broken up, and a deſtroying deluge of immorality, treaſon, and impiety overflowed the land.

Illi,
Qua data porta, ruunt, et terras turbine perflant.

Line 183. True virtue is humility of mind.

"True humility, ſays Burke, the baſis of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, is the low, but deep foundation of all real virtue. In a ſmall degree, and operating on little things, vanity is of little moment; when full grown, it is the worſt of vices, and the occaſional mimick of them all; it makes the whole man falſe; it leaves nothing ſincere or truſt-worthy about him; his beſt qualities are poiſoned and perverted by it, and operate exactly as the worſt."

Line 205. And inly pining, &c.

This is a figure which could occur only to one, who, like Fayette, had viewed the ſcenery of an American foreſt, and witneſſed the method there employed for clearing the land from its encumbering woods. The farmer ſets fire, during the dry ſeaſon, to the low buſhes which often cover the whole ſurface of the ground; through them the flame ſpreads with great velocity,

and the underwood is often cleared, and the ſoil made fit for paſture, without much injury to the taller trees. Sometimes, however, an aged elm, or a venerable oak, whoſe ſapleſs trunk was unable to reſiſt the heat, catches fire in the heart, and continues to burn for weeks, ſmoke iſſuing from all its crevices, while it appears ſtill green and flouriſhing at the top. "Often," ſays a modern Traveller, "often, amidſt the ſtillneſs of the deſolated foreſt, have I pauſed to contemplate a ſcene like this, an emblem of the lot of man."

Line 277. Nature's baubles, &c.

Earthquakes and Comets are certainly no baubles in themſelves, but they are trifling and inſignificant as omens to foretell future events. The idea here, ſeems taken from Cato's ſublime reply to Labienus, in the 9th Book of Lucan's Pharſalia.

Line 312. Duties which bound us, &c.

This is not the place for a long diſcuſſion, otherwiſe it might eaſily be proved, that our *Duties* precede our *Rights*, and that we are bound by the former, before we have any title to aſſert the latter. That our Duties, therefore, in preference to our Rights, ought to be inculcated by private inſtruction, and enforced by public authority, is a doctrine conſonant to Reaſon, and favourable to Morality. From the neglect of this doctrine aroſe moſt

of the abſurdities and miſeries attending the late propagation of the Rights of Man.

Line 333. On ſportive tournaments, &c.

Alluding to the Miſchianza as exhibited at Philadelphia, 18th May 1778, and deſcribed in the newſpapers with all the fancy and all the folly of Romance. Never, in the midſt of miſconduct and diſgrace, was ſuch an inſult offered to a miſguided army, and a deluded nation.

The gallant, though unſucceſsful, exertions of our officers and ſoldiers at different times upon the continent, have at laſt reſtored our military character from that ſtate of degradation into which it was ſunk by the miſconduct of the American war. A brave and experienced officer is not now converted into a mercenary commiſſary; nor is private gain held a ſufficient compenſation for the loſs of national honour. The merit of our ſailors is above all praiſe. This martial character, which we have happily regained, is a compenſation for many of the evils we have had to encounter in the preſent ſtruggle; joined to an union with Ireland, now advancing under favourable auſpices, and to the arming the yeomanry of the country, it is in fact a renovation of our conſtitution, and will probably, under Divine Providence, ſecure our exiſtence and proſperity, as a nation, for ages to come.

Line 379. You ſtrove to ſpeak, &c.

The circumſtances here deſcribed, actually took place in autumn 1783. General Waſhington's delicate ſenſibility, the ſure mark of an ingenuous mind, was well known to every one who had the honour of being acquainted with him. Though nobody ſpoke better than he did on ordinary ſubjects, ſublime, pious, or grateful ſentiments, always overcame him, and produced feelings too big for utterance. After the ſcene deſcribed in the text, when he returned, the deliverer of his country, to reſign his commiſſion into the hands of Congreſs, at Annapolis, it was remarked, that his voice faultered, when he addreſſed them, and there were ſome parts of his ſpeech, which he was ſcarce able to pronounce. "The importance of the ſcene," ſays an eye witneſs, (after deſcribing the form of the Reſignation, and after detailing the particulars of the General's ſpeech), "the importance of the ſcene filled every mind, and every boſom was prediſpoſed to ſympathize with the feelings of the illuſtrious ſpeaker; ſo that theſe ſimple ſentiments, delivered in a manner as ſimple, produced an effect, to which all the efforts of eloquence have often proved unequal. The General began in a firm manner, and with a ſteady voice; but when he came to mention his gratitude to Divine Providence and to his Country for ſupport during the arduous conteſt, the pious, manly ſentiment ſwelled his breaſt, his voice faultered, and the paper trembled in his hand. Nor was the audience unmoved; every ſpectator

breathed ſhort, every face turned pale, and every eye was moiſtened with a tear."

In early youth, when the thanks of the aſſembly of the ſtate of Virginia were delivered to him by the ſpeaker in his place, for his meritorious and ſucceſsful exertions in bringing off the broken remains of Braddock's army from the unfortunate expedition to Fort du Queſne, he aroſe to reply; but when he had pronounced *Mr. Preſident*, the exceſs of his feelings ſuppreſſed all power of utterance; he bluſhed, and ſat down. Again he aroſe, but again he was obliged to be ſilent. A third time he attempted to ſpeak, and a third time he was forced to ſit down. Upon which a member exclaimed, "There can be nothing more ſaid "upon the ſubject; it is the moſt eloquent ſpeech I ever heard."

Line 452. When jarring diſcord ſpread the hubbub far, &c.

At length an univerſal hubbub wild,
Of ſtunning ſounds and voices all confuſed,
Borne through the hollow dark, aſſaults his ear.

MILTON'S PAR. LOST, B. 2d.

THE END.

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